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THE GLASGOW EXHIBITION

which signifies a knowledge of everything. 'Men of Genius in History,' and 'Christ in Hell' are conventional, and there is more of theatrical than of monumental elements in them.

Sascha Schneider is fond of Assyrian motives, whether he represents 'The Lord of this World,' who, powerful and cold, is leaning on his throne and trampling on the head of Jesus, that is crowned with thorns, or whether he is drawing the gate ornamented with horrid heads, with beards in the shape of wedges—the Assyrian type comes out very strikingly, and awakes the association of ideas intended by the artist, which remind us of tyranny, licence, orgies, and luxury. And in front of such a Babylon stands a young man—both arms are raised above his head on which he carries a bomb, that will soon destroy this city of disorder. This city has stood for thousands of years, and resisted all storms, but it will not be able to resist that demon of destruction, that, being both blind and merciless, will destroy it, together with its corruption.

The state of the soul of a youth crushed down by the horrible figure of 'Grief,' standing beside the corpse of an old man, and the cartoons entitled 'The Feeling of Dependence,' and the 'Prince of Damnation,' are perhaps the most original.

'Mammon and his Slave' transfers us into Egypt, for, by representing Mammon with the head of a hawk, and the powerful beak of a bird of prey, he reminds us of the Egyptian god. In his left hand is a whip, with gold coins hanging to the lashes, which he is holding over a slave lying at his feet; in his right hand are chains. We must also mention 'The Fight for a Soul,' and 'The Thought about Infinity,' the latter being the best expression of that intense longing for the beautiful, and for liberty, that longing which is the soul of all Sascha Schneider's creative power.

Had I followed the idea of certain writers on art, who, like Renan, for instance, claim that the idea in Raphael's pictures is not of much importance, and that the only thing that carries weight is the picture itself, I should have paid no attention to Sascha Schneider's art. But I consider that art is one of the means by which the human *Ego* can be expressed, consequently

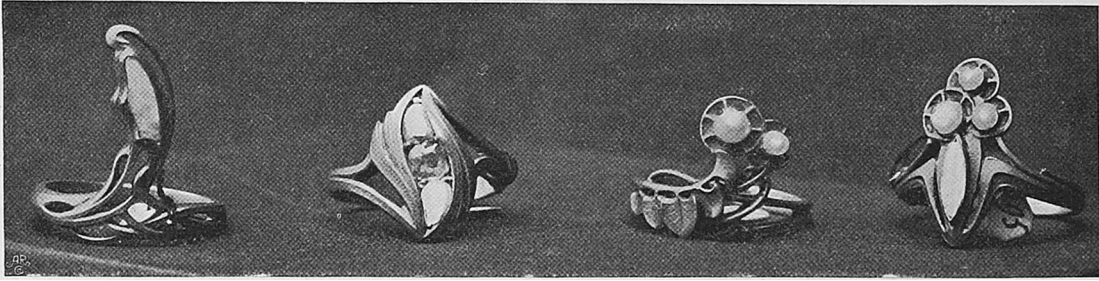
it must contain all the elements of which man is composed. An artist strives to express himself in his art; seldom, however, are there to be found such perfect artistic natures that they possess absolute harmony between their *Ego* and the art that has to express it; but there are some natures for which one art is not sufficient. Many artists, from the time of the renaissance downwards, have been at the same time sculptors, painters, poets, architects, and engineers. But when an artist, who possesses a complicated nature, has only one art, he will strive to put the whole of his *Ego* into the one art that he can grasp. An artist who does not possess analytical capacity, and who has not a theoretical judgment in questions of his own art, is able to blunder about the strength of its means; he may desire to found, through his art, as Wagner desired to found by means of his music, a new religion, or to reform morals; he may think as Kaulbach did, that 'his historical phrases' will convince someone; we can pardon them this much more easily, because, despite of everything, their works possess great merit, but we cannot pardon the critics who applaud their mistakes.

Sascha Schneider has found the way to express his *Ego*, and although his mode of expression is somewhat too heavy, too Russo-German, too enigmatical, it is nevertheless strong and eloquent, and sometimes vehement, like the art of that other draughtsman-philosopher with the sad, thoughtful forehead, Felicien Rops, whom we have recently lost.

ARTS AND CRAFTS AT THE GLASGOW EXHIBITION BY W. FRED

I MUST confess it is not a pleasant task to write on decorative art at the Glasgow exhibition. Every hour passed at this fair recalls memories of the Paris Exhibition, and—let it be frankly stated—in every respect, especially as regards quality, every section of the Paris exhibition offered more to the public than the whole industrial hall at Glasgow. The Paris fair has come in for its share of blame, but with every day that has passed since, the harsh

PARIS v. GLASGOW

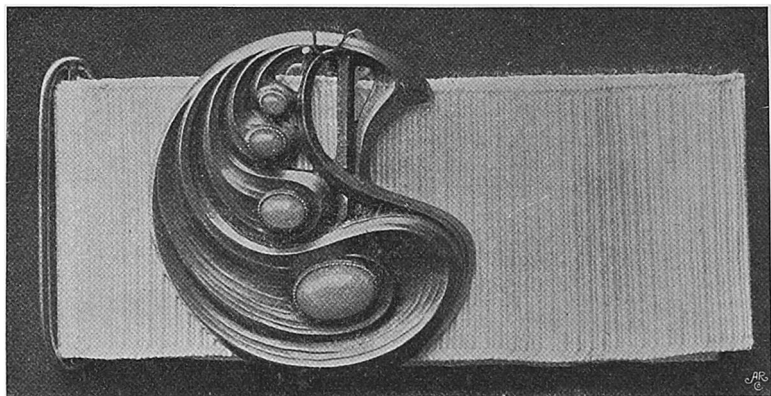


RINGS, BY DUFRÈNE
LA MAISON MODERNE

judgment has been modified. The beneficial effects of a juxtaposition in groups of the decorative work of the different nations at a gigantic exhibition are becoming more and more apparent. It is a pity the guiding spirits of the Glasgow Exhibition did not learn the moral of the Paris method. It is exasperating to see that difficult experiments are made with the greatest possible success, but without being utilised afterwards. I do not know who is responsible for the arrangements of the Glasgow exhibition, and particularly of the industrial hall, which contains the arts and crafts section, but I do know that some men whose duty it is to arrange some of the leading drapers' shop windows, would have accomplished the task with more skill and artistic taste.

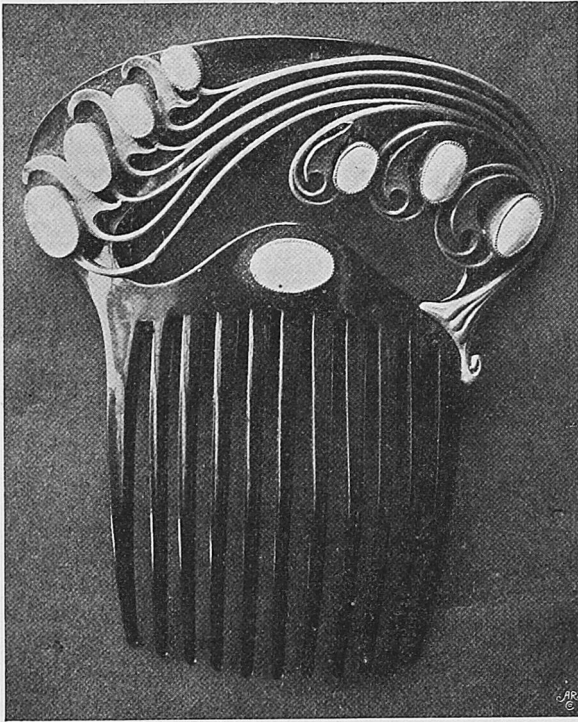
After all, we have already an acknowledged exhibition 'technique.' At first exhibitions were divided according to nations or politically confined districts, like the first international exhibitions in London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna. The Chicago World's Fair, and, even more, last year's Paris Exhibition, made a great step forward. The ethnographic division was not carried out any longer *a priori* for all branches of human activity, but within every group, so

that the productions of the different countries in the same branch of industry could be seen side by side : f.i. the arts and crafts of Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, etc., in the same hall, then, a little further, side by side again, the machinery of the same countries, so that one could form a fair idea of the manner of working, the aims, the artistic level, the positive and negative factors of every country. This kind of exhibition was an attempt. That it succeeded is beyond doubt, and I do not think that any serious exhibition will ever be arranged again on the old lines. We have become accustomed to take international exhibition seriously, and not to look for their effects in the immediate increase of export on general volume of business, but in the exchange of ideas, the spread of new techniques, the insight into foreign styles of production. In these points we must find the national economic equivalent for the enormous outlay, for the loss of force which must always be, more or less, the immediate result of such an exhibition. Well, the moving spirits of the Glasgow Exhibition have failed to grasp all this. They have built a large hall, where every country has its allotted space and exhibits case after case, filled with anything you please.



BUCKLE, BY F. LLOT
LA MAISON MODERNE

THE FOREIGN SECTION



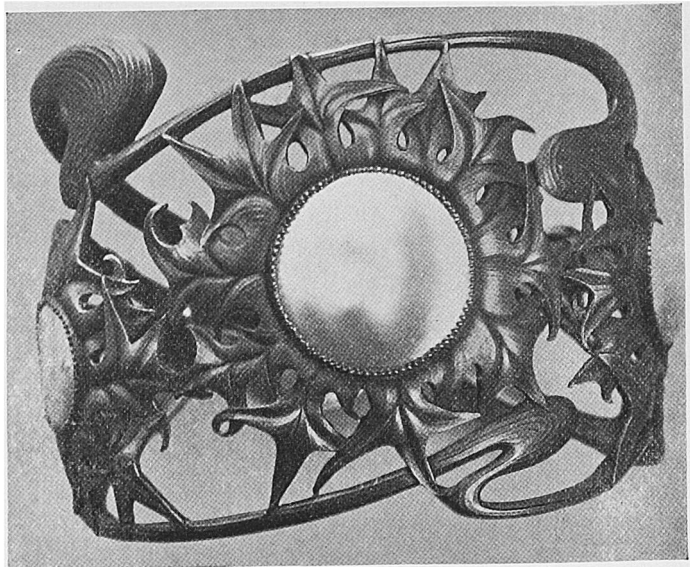
COMB, BY FOLLOT
LA MAISON MODERNE

There could be no talk of any general aspect, of any serious benefit to the public, even if the Exhibition had been anything like representative.

But—International Exhibition? What a delusion! Let us consider it a little closer. Great Britain, with the exception of Scotland, has exhibited but little. Germany nothing—not a single object, Italy nothing, Belgium nothing, Holland nothing, the Balkan States nothing, the United States nothing. Austria is represented by four or five firms, France by a few remnants of the Paris fair, Russia by some few objects, Denmark by some china and fayence. That they have not found it worth their while is not the fault of the Exhibition committee. But is this an *international* exhibition of arts and industries? Can a fair of this nature be taken seriously, described and criticised? Would it not be better to say: 'I have been deceived. I do not wish to have anything to do with it?' There is nothing but a provincial exhibition of local, or perhaps national, Scotch

interest, but foreign countries have sent nothing but market-ware, stock things from Paris—no new article, no new technique, no novel form, nothing that might advance the development by a single step. Only for the sake of the few British art-workers who are showing some really good things, I will enter into a discussion of the arts and crafts at the exhibition. The international part can be dismissed with a few words of praise for the installation of the Austrian section, designed by Baumann, and executed in green stained wood with brass fittings, and containing an interior with very good bent wood furniture by Messrs. Kohn. Besides these, there is the well-known Bohemian Tiffany glass by R. v. Spaun and some mediocre bronzes by Rubinstein—nothing else. In the French section are some glasses *à la Gallé* by Daum, some fine jewellery by René Foy and Feuillatré, some furniture by Plumet and Selmersheim, with a strongly marked relationship to Van de Velde, and with frequent use of bad, purely decorative ornament and some really good light fittings by the same firm. There is also a remarkable exhibit by the Maison Moderne (Paris) under the not too discriminate management of the German, Mr. Meier-Gräfe, which includes objects of every description: furniture, jewellery, bric-à-brac, bronzes, etc., by artists of all countries.

In the Danish section I noticed again the earthenware work of the widow Ipsen (Copen-



BRACELET, BY ORAZI
LA MAISON MODERNE

THE ROYAL RECEPTION ROOMS



DRAWING-ROOM
BY MESSRS. WHYLIE & LOCHHEAD

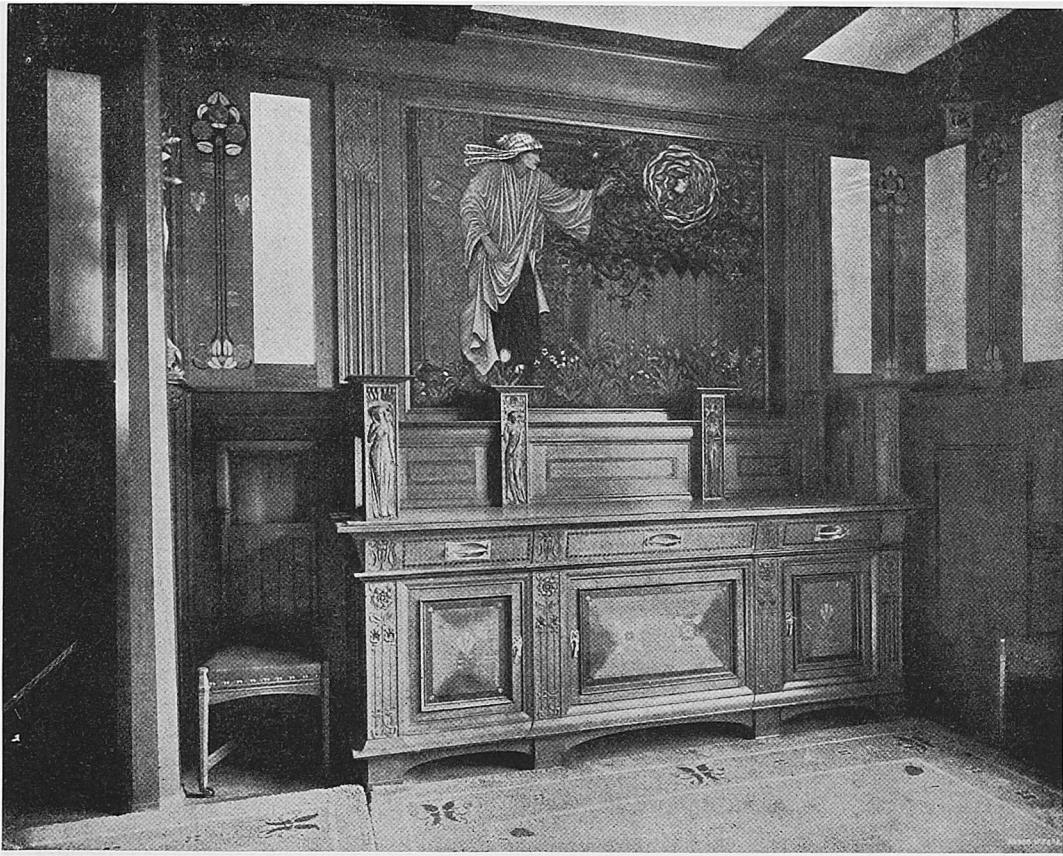
hagen), of excellent material, terracottas that feel as hard as stone, perfectly dense, and sounding like a bell. The colour of these objects is yellow, the graceful floral decoration green and slightly naturalistic, the design excellent.

And now I can pass over to the British section. The only firm whose pavilion requires recording is that of Messrs. Whylie & Lochhead (Glasgow). Messrs. Heal's bedroom has been removed bodily from the Paris Exhibition, and has already received due appreciation. Besides these there are only some upholsterers' show-cases, furniture in Sheraton and in Adam style, and some of no style at all—something between Chippendale and modern Gothic, but without any pretensions at artistic merit, originating from trade competition of the lowest order.

Messrs. Whylie and Lochhead are showing two rooms. They are responsible for the execution of the royal reception rooms, which have,

however, not been designed independently by the architects of the firm. These rooms are, indeed, less harmonious than the others, a new proof of the close connection between designer and craftsman. The royal reception rooms consists of a hall from which a staircase in white enamelled wood leads to the upper part of the building, a dining-room and a drawing-room. The best feature of the hall is the wall filling of silk tapestry, ornamented with a large conventional flower pattern. The furniture is enamelled in white and covered with bluish-green appliqué work. The copper of the light fittings forms a good contrast to the brilliant white of the furniture. The dining-room attempts a compromise with the Early English historical style, and is, like all such attempts, only partially successful. Whatever good effect this room may produce is due to the warm tone of the oak panelling along the walls. Unfortunately the ceiling and frieze are spoilt by

THE GLASGOW EXHIBITION



THE BURNE-JONES DINING-ROOM
BY WHYLLIE & LOCHHEAD

some appalling modern stucco or anaglypta decoration. The forms of the furniture are solid and heavy, the legs of table and chairs and the backs of the chairs too elaborately carved, the metal-fittings—especially round the fireplace—of steel. The combination of materials in this room, the floor of which is covered with a Persian rug, is not particularly happy. There is nothing to be said about the drawing-room, which contains fair copies of what the catalogue describes as Louis XV. furniture. They look rather like Louis XVI., or, at least, very late Louis XV.

Far more satisfactory are the interiors of the pavilion by that same firm. The little house itself, whose white walls are decorated with wooden beams, is graceful, elegant, and not only possible for exhibition purposes, but might—with the necessary basement and roof serve as dwelling-house for a small family. The entrance

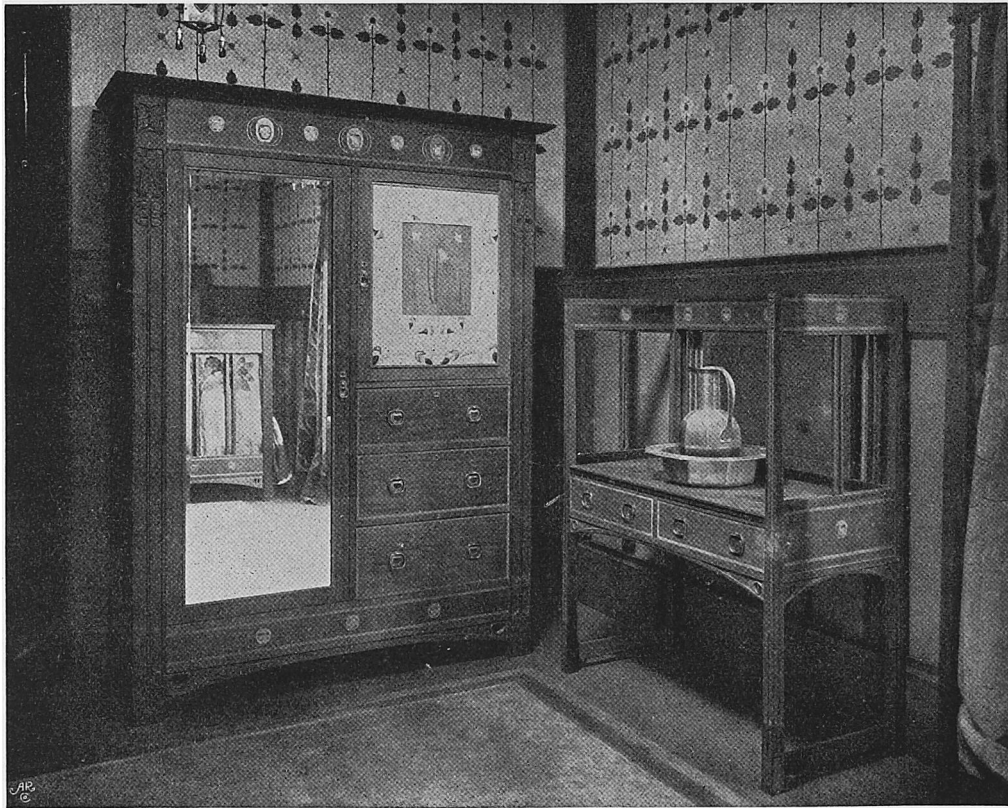
door of green stained wood with copper fittings has a fine, rich effect. It leads into the 'Rossetti Library.' Whether the style of this interior is really based on the style of the pre-Raphaelites, and particularly of Rossetti, as is stated on the catalogue, is a little questionable. F. M. Brown's furniture looked different, more primitive, stronger, leaning rather towards the early Gothic period. And Rossetti would surely not have been much attracted by the dainty, fragile, purple furniture of this room, which, it must be admitted, is thoroughly harmonious. The curved shapes of the ingle-nook seats, at least, would never have appealed to him. The relationship of style can only be found in the colour of the room, a deep purple which would, indeed, be productive of a soft, sentimental mood, and in the decorative use of Hollier's photographs from pictures by Rossetti. I must confess I fail to see why beautiful mahogany

THE ROSSETTI AND BURNE-JONES ROOMS

should be stained purple. It is not a proof of highest 'culture,' if one strives to alter at any price the values of nature. The colours and material of polished mahogany in its natural tone, or slightly darkened—which means intensifying, not falsifying the colour—are at least as beautiful as purple stain. Altogether the craftsmen of this firm seem to have taken a fancy to staining wood and producing curious tones, as if ceiling, frieze, carpet, chair-coverings, curtains, etc., would not give sufficient scope to this craving, which is also apparent in the very suggestive appliqué embroidery frieze of the Rossetti room. The adjoining dining-room is under the sign of Burne-Jones. But the effect is here achieved in a more direct way. A tapestry panel, designed by Burne-Jones, and executed by Morris, is let into the grey oak panelling as artistic centre and main decoration of the room. The few pieces of oak furniture are exactly fitted to the proportions of the room, almost built into it, which—to the great advan-

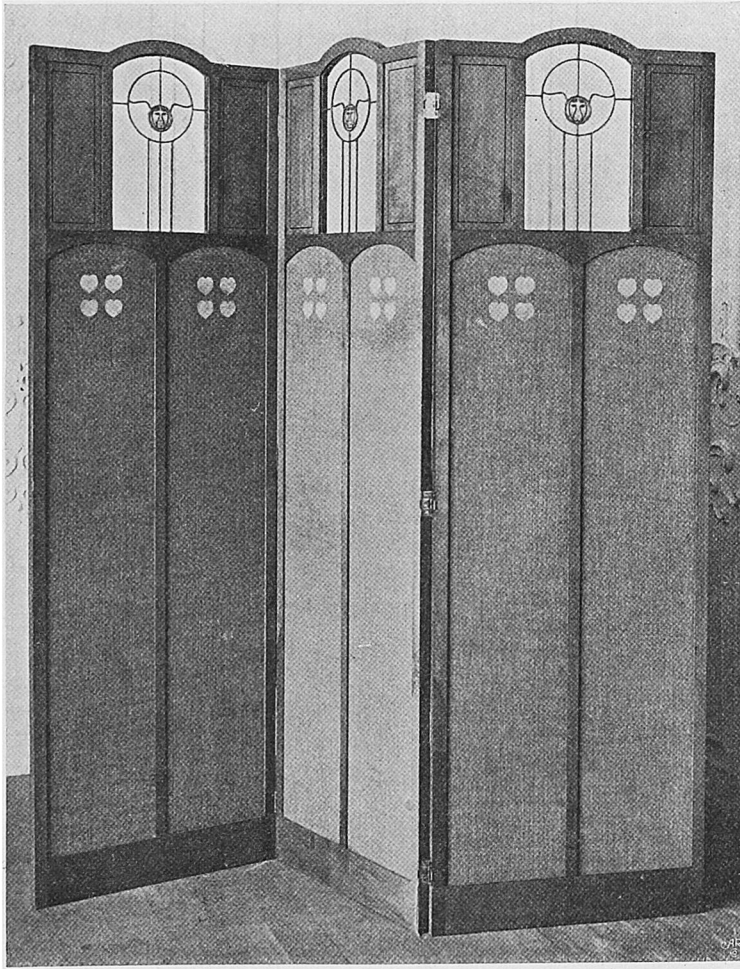
tage of the room—makes it appear larger than its actual size. The colouring is very harmonious. The light grey of the wood, the green leather of the chairs, the frequently employed coloured intarsia work, the blue carpet, the green tones of the copper of the light fittings, the excellent leaded glass of the windows form a fine, and not too loud, symphony of colour. Much of the detail may be objected to, like the green of the copper—but the general effect is decidedly artistic.

A description of the remaining rooms would be monotonous; one can only state the same artistic mannerisms: dyeing and staining the wood, rich material, a profusion of details. None of the rooms are simple, and all, probably, costly. Apparently Messrs. Whyllie and Lochhead have not yet discovered the secret of constructing tasteful rooms with simple means, but the good artistic tendency of these interiors justifies the hope that this result may be speedily achieved.



BEDROOM
BY MESSRS. WHYLLIE & LOCHHEAD

THE WOMEN'S SECTION



A SCREEN
BY MESSRS. WHYLIE & LOCHHEAD

The drawing-rooms show white frames filled with green silk. The greater part of the furniture is again purple, like the carpet and curtains. Mother-of-pearl makes its appearance in the inlay—a questionable material for modern furniture, although the traditions of the furnisher's art often shows its use in France.

The most original and most carefully thought out room is a lady's bedroom, though some of the forms are artificial and of imperfect construction. Some of the furniture is forced and artificial, and therefore inartistic, like the badly proportioned toilet table, or a chair with pointed back. To the same category I should reckon the attempts at using silvery aluminium together with enamel and inlay for decorative purposes. The wall-filling of this room is excellent, embroidered canvas of delicate purple hue, and bed and washing-stand are splendidly designed.

Having spoken of Whylie & Lochhead's interiors, I have nothing more to say. The rest of the furniture is of the trade kind, although the picture gallery contains some fine pieces, lent by private collectors and museums. The typical, somewhat meagre, ornaments of the Glasgow School of Arts appear frequently, and it is also refreshing to see some excellent pieces of metal-work. The material is treated with thorough knowledge of its limitations, the decoration admirably adapted to it.

The same observations can be made in the women's section. Whatever does not come from Paris—like the Norwegian embroideries by Frida Hansen, who is also showing a new transparent tapestry 'White Rose,' or the Sherebeck carpets with their grotesque designs—emanates from the neighbourhood of the School of Arts. Here, too, can be found good and bad—the

NOTES FROM BIRMINGHAM

latter rather predominating. Side by side with beautiful old lace can be found some horrible new lace. Embroideries and woven stuffs are better. No nation has a style of ornament as decidedly national as the Scotch. These embroideries are carefully thought out, exact in execution, a little monotonous in their per-



A TABLE
BY WHYLLIE & LOCHHEAD

fection. Reason and calculation are taking the place of taste and artistic impulse in this craft.

I have tried to speak of the 'features' of the Exhibition in a not too strictly critical spirit. It is needless to add up the figures and draw the balance. Whoever can read will find it out for himself.

W. FRED.

NOTES FROM BIRMINGHAM

'BETTER late than never' is an adage that holds good in criticism as in other things—over pressure of matter must alone account for our delay in mentioning the most recent exhibition at the Graves' Galleries, since it was a 'one-man' show of unusual merit and interest.

The artist, Mr. Charles Whymper, appealed to a threefold public—artists, sportsmen, and naturalists—and from each he received the approval which was undeniably his due.

The skilful rendering of game-birds is not an easy task, there is always a danger of giving that still-life effect which is so unpleasantly suggestive of the early Victorian glass shade. Mr. Whymper happily steers clear of this difficulty by his painstaking observation of characteristic and life-like attitude; the results obtained in the portrayal of some of these pheasants, partridges, grouse and water-fowl testify to years of earnest devotion, certainly as artist and probably as sportsman, to the study of birds under every possible aspect.

But it is not in the representation of the feathered tribe alone, that Mr. Whymper's art claims attention; he has achieved a great success in the painting called *A Real Big Stag*, in which he collaborated with the late Mr. Joseph Wolf under whom he studied. An avowedly joint production of this sort is a rare thing in modern art—and not, perhaps, generally speaking advisable—but in this case the combination was evidently felicitous, the head of the stag which faces the spectator is impressive and beautifully poised. We noticed too among the 'big game' a small picture of African animals, in which some giraffes and springbok, standing at a water-hole, were very ably realised.

Messrs. Henry Graves and Co. are producing a photogravure of *Killed as he tops the Fence*, which is one of the largest of the bird pictures, an excellent canvas depicting a flight of grouse; the one bird that has fallen to a well-aimed shot is particularly well given. These pictures in point of colour, accurate draughtmanship and